

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SUFFOLK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS,
RECREATION AND CONSERVATION
MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 17, 2015
MONTAUK COUNTY PARK
MONTAUK, NEW YORK**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Miles Borden	Trustee, Town of Smithtown
Gilbert Cardillo	Trustee, Town of Riverhead
Kathleen Gooding	Vice Chair, Town of Shelter Island
Dawn Hopkins	Chair, Trustee, Town of Brookhaven
Debra Kolyer	Member of the Board
Alexander McKay	Trustee, Town of Huntington
Terence McSweeney	Trustee, Town of Babylon
Richard F. White, Jr.	Trustee, Town of East Hampton

ABSENT

Peter Leis	Trustee, Town of Islip
Arthur Leudesdorf	Trustee, Town of Southold
Terrence Pearsall	Member of the Board
William B. Sickles	Trustee, Town of Southampton
VACANT	Member at Large

PARKS DEPARTMENT

Greg Dawson	Commissioner
Nick Gibbons	Principal Environmental Analyst
Barbara Rittman	Senior Clerk Typist

GUESTS

DPO Honorable Jay Schneiderman	Legislator, 2 nd District
Christina DeLisi	Legislative Aide to Dep. Presiding Off. Jay Schneiderman

PUBLIC PORTION

London Rosiere was in attendance representing the new Camp Soulgrow program at Third House in Montauk. Legislator Schneiderman explained that the camp is an activities program largely centered in the Montauk community. It is a not-for profit program created to help children find their self-esteem, nurture each other and grow together. The camp had a successful summer and a surplus bus was also acquired through a grant so that the camp will have its own transportation next year. Legislator Schneiderman conveyed that he would like the Third House to be available as a center for environmental programs and learning about the history of the area so that it plays more of an active role in the community.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF AUGUST 20, 2015

Page 3, Chair's Report, 2nd paragraph, 2nd sentence – Commissioner Dawson explained that the Rangers are hired as **Peace Officers**.....

A motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Trustee Cardillo and seconded by Trustee Borden. The minutes were unanimously approved by a vote of 8-0-0.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Dawson thanked Trustee White and Ruth for their hospitality. He reported that at the last Legislative meeting there were three routine special events approved.

Commissioner Dawson updated on a pending bill pertaining to the use of drones in County Parks. Prior to its passage, it will require two public hearings between now and February 1st. A policy and procedure, and fee schedule for launching and landing drones in County Parks will need to be established.

Legislator Schneiderman commented that with the abundance of extraordinary county parkland that exists, drones are an excellent tool to achieve panoramic views through photography. He stated that he supports the Parks Department establishing some rules to protect public safety and he voted for the new bill. He encouraged rules that will allow hobbyists and amateurs to use drones in a safe and responsible way, and would not approve of anyone interfering with wildlife or use of drones in lifeguarded public beaches. Commissioner Dawson added that children's playgrounds, horseback riding trails and campgrounds should be reviewed. Acquiring a permit will be required and there will be set guidelines and regulations to be followed.

Legislator Schneiderman stated that he hopes to one day see Third House utilized to its fullest potential. There are funds still available to get the building up to code for public use. There are cabins and facilities at Third House for camping, as well as thousands of acres of pristine parkland containing grassland and estuaries, and archeologically significant land. There is hiking to the ocean, the lighthouse, horseback riding, kayaking and mountain biking that are all available and presently under-utilized. Montauk has many recreational and educational activities to offer. There is a lot of history at Third House going back to the time of the Rough Riders and it was the first cattle ranch in the United States. It was also the last habitation area of the Montauk Indians, containing archeological remains as well.

Nick Gibbons updated on the second phase of the dredging project at Smith Point County Park. The dredging is expected to begin early to mid-October. During Phase One of the project, 1.1 million cubic yards was placed and approximately forty percent of the project was completed. The next phase is 1.5 million cubic yards and completion is expected to take about five months, factoring in poor weather conditions. The project is beginning earlier this year than last and the total cost is approximately \$52 million overall.

Nick reported that a community meeting would be held that night in Northville on the North Fork County Park. It was a 300 acre county acquisition costing approximately \$18 million. 125 acres of the property has been dedicated for passive recreation and the 175 acre balance for active recreation.

Trustee Cardillo represents the Parks Trustees at the North Fork CP community meetings. He reported that the 175 acres on the southern portion of the property that is dedicated for active recreation would be used for such activities as camping and horseback riding. The 125 acres on the northern portion and dedicated to passive recreation borders most of the private homes in the area. He added that once camping is available in the park, it will be an effective revenue producing activity for the County. At present, there are no County-owned parks offering camping or horseback riding on the North Fork.

Nick updated on the piping plover season with statistics distributed for review. The sites listed on the bottom portion of the chart show locations where plovers have nested in the past but are inactive at present. Some pairs re-nest several times in one season, re-setting the time clock for their departure later each time. A lot of re-nesting occurs due to predation and occasional flooding. The recovery goal as established by the Fish & Wildlife Service is 1.5. Closures due to plover nesting at Smith Point CP impact the public the most and the results are poor which is very discouraging. Conditions on the North Shore are more protected for the birds and they have almost 24/7 access to foraging, so productivity rates there are a lot higher. At a location such as

Smith Point CP, there is predation which is also exacerbated by human interaction. It varies from site to site, but foxes, gulls, raccoons and crows are the primary predators.

Commissioner Dawson commended Superintendent Tony Trotta, Supervisors Steve Tooker, Mike LaBarbara, Mike Greaves and the Parks staff for the great job in keeping the beaches and camp grounds clean while packed to capacity during the summer season.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Hopkins thanked Trustee White and Ruth for their hospitality. She commented that she is very interested in the increasing popularity of drones and the guidelines for usage as they develop. The new resolution states that owners must be within line of sight of their drones and the Commissioner will provide updates after the public hearings are held.

ROUND TABLE

Trustee Gooding inquired about progress on the Cedar Point Lighthouse. Commissioner Dawson stated that Mike Leahy from the U.S. Lighthouse Historical Society is supposed to be generating funds to refurbish it. The lantern from the lighthouse was taken down and is being worked on. The most urgent project is to replace the roof in order to save the lighthouse, and capital improvement funds for historic structures must be appropriated before the end of 2015.

Trustee Cardillo reported that the ceiling fans in the restrooms on the point at Indian Island CP are not working and the solar panel on the roof of one of them is smashed and broken. Commissioner Dawson will report it to the East Zone Supervisor.

The next Parks Trustee meeting will be held at the Police Museum (next to Hawkins House) in Yaphank on Thursday, October 15, 2015.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Trustee White and was seconded by Trustee McKay. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 8-0-0.